SOUTHWEST MUSEUM PAPERS

Number Three

Indians - no. Ute

The Tragedy of the Blackfoot

by Walter McClintock

NOTE: This is the third of a series of scientific reports published occasionally by the Southwest Museum. The first issue was a report of an Archæological Reconnaissance in Sonora, by Monroe Amsden; the second, a report of Excavations at Casa Grande, Arizona, by Harold S. Gladwin. Copies may be had at fifty cents each as long as the supplies last.

"This new series of the Southwest Museum, which has recently re-devoted itself to work in the area of its name, is attractive in appearance and promising in content. Amsden's Sonoran reconnaissance has value in reporting on a region practically unvisited by archeologists except Bandelier and Lumholtz . . . . Gladwin's paper on Casa Grande is an important one . . . . The Southwest Museum is to be congratulated on an auspicious start."—American Anthropologist.

SOUTHWEST MUSEUM PAPERS

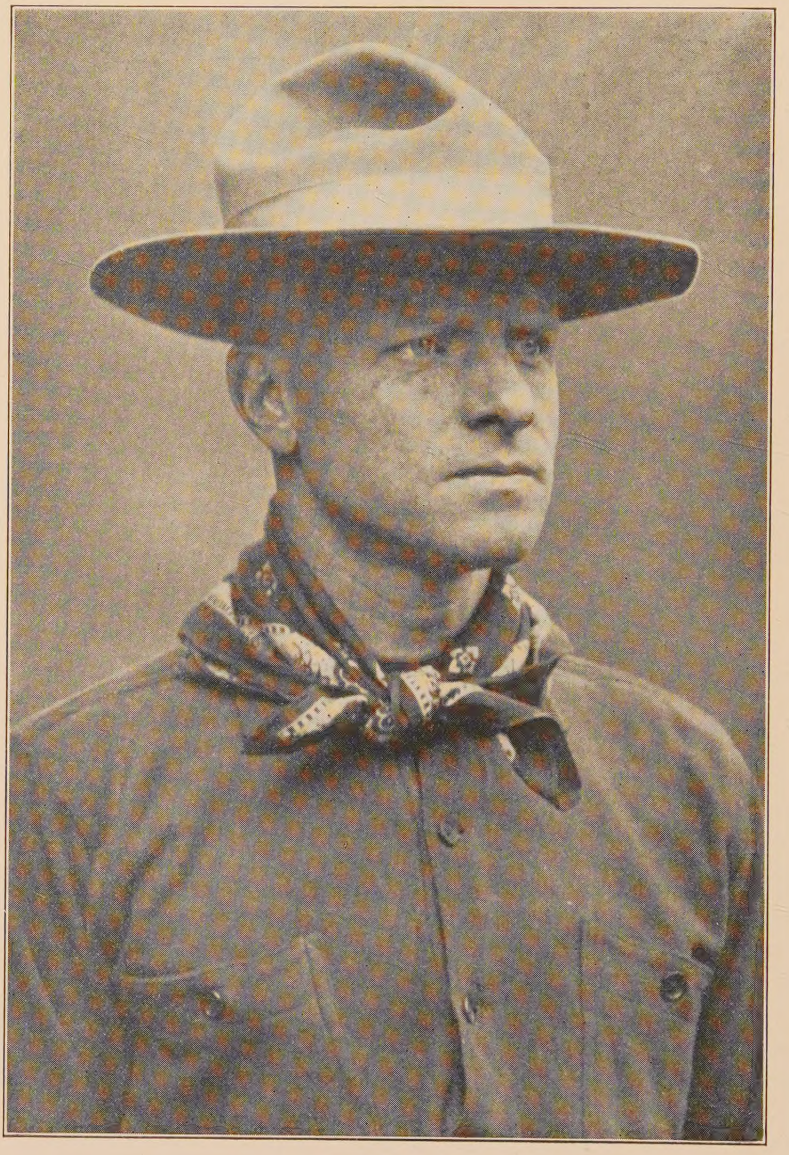
Number Three

The Tragedy of the Blackfoot

by Walter McClintock, M.A. (Yale)
Research Fellow in Ethnology

Published by the
SOUTHWEST MUSEUM
Highland Park, Los Angeles. California

April, 1930



Walter McClintock

THE TRAGEDY OF THE BLACKFOOT

By Walter McClintock

The purpose of this monograph is to make known the results of studies during the transitional period of the Blackfoot Indians of Northern Montana. I was closely associated with them many years ago, when the old generation was still alive, and have continued to study them in the succeeding years.

They have been trying to adapt themselves to their new life, with no alternative but extinction. They face their destiny in competition with aggressive materialistic white men, who have poured into their country seeking to develop its resources and their own interests, without considering the effect upon the Indians. They are passing away or being absorbed before our eyes, overwhelmed in the struggle for existence. The curtain is already falling on this tragedy so little understood by the white race.

I first came into contact with the Blackfoot tribe by chance. An unusual train of circumstances took me into the northwest at different times. On one of these trips I went with a government pack-train—a forestry expedition—into a wild and unfrequented country of the Northern Rockies. It was then a paradise for hunting and fishing, visited only by Indians and trappers and a few hunters of big game. An Indian scout of the Blackfoot tribe was my good friend and companion. We were thrown together in our forestry work. He was the head guide. I was photographer for the expedition and helped in the forest surveys.

When our expedition was finished and the government foresters returned to civilization, I stayed with my friend the scout. We were camped on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, in the country of the Flathead Indians, on a lovely lake surrounded by forest-covered mountains. We had a good "outfit"—saddle horses and pack horses, a comfortable Indian tipi and plenty of food. Our government work was finished, it was the beginning of summer and we were free to wander.

We journeyed eastward across the main range of the Rocky Mountains. And came finally to a large camp of the Blackfoot, on the plains beyond the foothills. Many hundreds of smoke-colored tipis, pitched in the form of a great circle more than a mile in circumference.

Through my friend, the Indian scout, I met the head men of the tribe—their head chief White Calf, also the war chiefs and medicine men. As we sat smoking a friendly pipe together, he explained that I came from the Great Father at Washington, on the benevolent

mission of protecting the forests of their country for future generations. In this way I also met Mad Wolf, an orator of renown and owner of the ancient Beaver Bundle, an important religious ceremony.

This was the beginning of a friendship, unusual between an Indian and a white man, and lasted as long as Mad Wolf lived. He adopted me as his son in a religious ceremony before a large gathering of his relatives and friends. And in a second ceremony in which he was assisted by the head chief and other prominent men, Mad Wolf opened his sacred Beaver Bundle of which he was the guardian and director. Thus they made me a member of the Blackfoot tribe and baptised me with the Indian name of A-pe-ech-eken (White Weasel Moccasin.)

I was introduced into innermost circles and became intimately associated in their family life. I made friends with Indians both old and young, chiefs and medicine men, and their women and children. I went with them on their travels and hunting expeditions; and thus came to know them well, and their wonderful country—high mountain ranges with virgin forests, lakes, swift streams, as well as boundless grass-covered prairies. I always carried cameras and note books, and made use of every opportunity for study and observation and picture records.

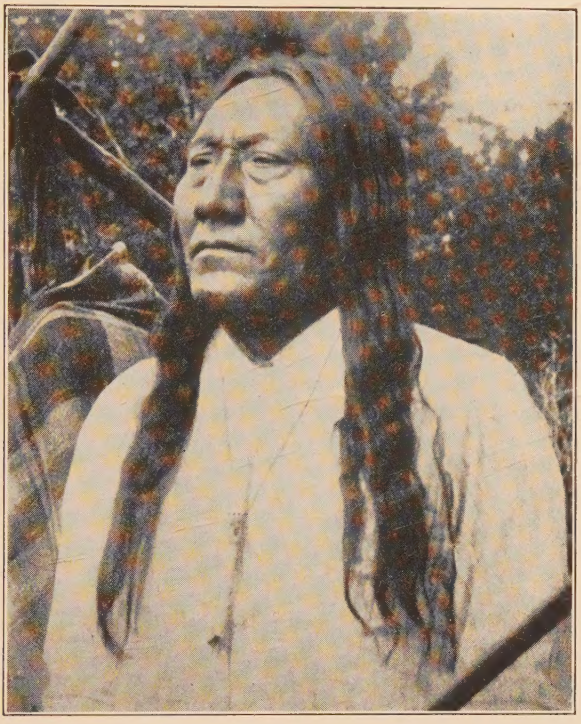
The old generation of Blackfoot were physically a splendid people, virile and warlike, of high intelligence, proud in their bearing, and fine looking; nor were the women less vigorous than the men. They were religious by nature and lived in a sort of dream world of myths and legends and ceremonies.

They were primitive Indians of the Stone Age, using primitive weapons and stone implements in their industries. They clung to their old customs and manner of living and to their native dances and ceremonies; they feared and mistrusted the white race and held themselves aloof.

Of that old generation was White Calf, the venerable head-chief of the tribe. He and Mad Wolf, my Indian father, lived near each other in the valley of Cutbank River. They had been friends for many years. Their families too were on intimate terms and continually visited each other. In this way I often saw the four stalwart sons of White Calf—Wolf Tail, Cross Guns, Night Gun, and Two Guns.

White Calf was then well along in years. But still active in tribal affairs and was a real father to his people. He gave freely to the poor and helped widows and orphans, but was also brave in war and of sound judgment. His most prominent trait was love for his fellow tribesmen.

Mad Wolf, my Indian father, was an orator of renown and director of an important religious ceremony. He was tall in stature,



Chief Mad Wolf

dignified in his manner, with broad and intelligent forehead, high cheek bones, keen eyes, and firm mouth. He wore his long hair falling loosely over his shoulders, an eagle feather in his back hair, and a bone whistle on his breast, with which he was accustomed to lead his religious ceremonies.

I also knew Running Crane, head-man of the band of Fat Melters, a venerable chief loved and respected throughout the tribe for his fine and just character. He was brave in war, yet of a kindly spirit, always ready to help those in trouble, and was known as a wise counsellor, one who acted as father to all the people.

Brings Down The Sun was an aged chief and medicine man of the old generation. I visited him for a week in his primitive camp and met his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. He was sort of a patriarch chieftain and reminded me in his dignity and high standing, of an upright and unapproachable justice of the supreme court. He had a fine mind and wonderful knowledge of the customs and traditions of his tribe, which he told to me in an orderly way,

like one with a trained mind. He stood high as a religious leader and was known as the greatest authority on Sun Worship.

Little Plume, the famous war chief, was also an unusual character. He was a fine type of warrior—a handsome man, dignified, deliberate in judgment and temperate in all things.

The Blackfoot were formerly a horseback people of nomads and hunters who lived in skin tipis which they carried with them, wandering in sort of annual circuit, according to the changing seasons, continually following the great herds of buffalo and other wild game, which furnished them with abundant food and skins for clothes and shelter. They lived a life of primitive wildness, and, in their native costumes of the skins of wild animals, were handsome and picturesque, almost beyond description.

They were tall in stature, aristocratic in spirit and warlike. For headdresses they wore the skins of otter, wolf, and fox about their heads, the tails hanging down behind, and war bonnets of eagle feathers; they had fine suits of soft-tanned deerskin decorated with colored quills and trimmed with black tipped ermine; and for robes the skins of buffalo, elk, and grizzly bear.

They had no written records—all lore and information were handed down from father to son. The family group was their chief educational institution. Until recently the last body of old wise men guarded jealously their traditions and knowledge of their power and religious ceremonies from white people, just as it had been preserved through centuries from their common people and those who were mentally unable to retain it.

The results of my studies of the Blackfoot tribe, were made known first in Germany, (in 1908) before the Anthropological Society of Berlin, in the Royal Ethnographical Museum, in a series of lectures in German, illustrated with photographs and Indian songs. The same year in Great Britian for the Royal Anthropological Society, Royal Institution, Royal Dublin Society. The Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh, and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

The attention given my work by the Learned Societies of Europe, and the whole hearted interest and enthusiasm of their greatest scientists, such as Sir James Frazer, Sir William Ridgeway, Professor Karl Von den Steinen and Dr. Edouard Zeler, made me realize the importance of securing all information possible from the old generation of Indians before it was too late. (They said I had opportunities for gathering from the Blackfoot tribe, a wealth of ethnological material such as could be found in few places of the entire world.)

I returned to America filled with enthusiasm to continue the work. After my travels in Europe and confinement in large cities, I longed for the broad prairies, the bracing air of the high plateau

country, the fragrance of flower meadows and pine forest of the Rocky Mountains; to meet again my Indian friends and family of the old chief.

MY RETURN TO THE TRIBE

Accordingly a few years later I left the Great Northern Railway at a small station on the prairies and went to Browning, the government agency for the Blackfoot Reservation. I met the Indian Agent and presented my credentials from Washington. He was an elderly man, an ex-army officer, recently arrived on the reservation and without experience with Indians.

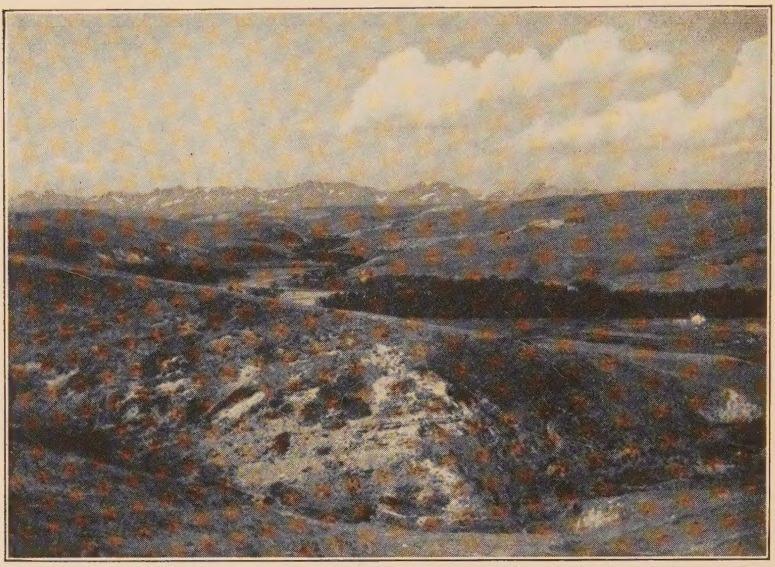
At Browning I secured horses and provisions and necessary equipment. I had with me a good outfit—a small traveling tipi which the Indians gave men on a former visit, blanket-bed with canvas cover for sleeping in the open, cameras, note books, and an instrument for recording Indian songs and speeches.

Browning was then an unattractive town upon an arid stretch of plain. Composed of rough and unsightly wooden buildings— the homes of government employees and administration buildings, four trading stores, a blacksmith shop, and a Catholic Church. The place was exposed to storms and blizzards, and the heavy winds which sweep over the northern prairies both summer and winter.

Not far from the town was a mission and the home of its missionary, established by the Epworth League of the Methodist Church. I arrived on Sunday, but the Protestant Church was closed, so I attended a religious service in the town conducted by a Catholic priest. In addition to their church in Browning, the Catholics had a mission with both school and church in the valley of Two Medicine River about twenty miles from the agency.

The day I arrived the Catholics were soliciting subscriptions for building a church in Browning. But they had a hard time arousing interest among the Indians, who said aptly to the priests: "Why do you want to build another place for the white man's religion, while we have near-by a church which is seldom used?" And they pointed to the empty building of the Protestant Church, which remained closed Sunday after Sunday, although the missionary was there and no one knew the reason. Indians do not understand denominational differences, nor could it be explained to their primitive minds.

On a clear morning of early June, I rode northward with my outfit across the prairies towards the home of Mad Wolf, my Indian father. I was no stranger in the country and knew my way. I jogged along towards a distant sky line, following a trail of former years with a delightful feeling of happiness and exhiliration. The prairies extended endlessly on all sides, billowing into grassy slopes and rising in low hills.



Country of the Blackfoot

West rose the mighty frontier range of the Rocky Mountains, their high summits glistening with glaciers and snow fields. Dim on the eastern horizon where the sun was rising, were the blue outlines of the Sweet Grass Hills.

I passed familiar scenes—streams and grassy valleys, lakes and cutbanks, lonely graves on the ridges and piles of stones like sentinels on high summits, placed by Indians to mark where notable events took place.

It was a warm spring-like morning. All the birds were singing —western meadow larks, yellow throats, and lovely mountain blue birds; horned larks were fluttering and trilling, hovering like butterflies against a deep blue sky. Along the streams were thickets of willows and snowberry bushes in flower; and in marshy places blue flags, scarlet painted cups, and blue-eyed grasses.

Chief Mad Wolf lived in the northern part of the reservation, on Cutbank River and in the foothill country near the mountains; where a high ridge of the Hudson Bay Divide joined the main range of the Rockies. His winter home was in a broad valley which extended to the foot of the mountains; and on both sides of the river were grass-covered uplands so vast, they looked like the open plains.

I crossed a high ridge of the prairies and from its summit looked down upon a green line of vegetation which marked the course of Cutbank River. I recognized the leafy crown of a huge cottonwood

tree that rose high over the valley. In former days while riding on the plains, it always marked from a distance the place where Mad Wolf lived in the valley.

I rode down from the hill country and crossed a broad table-land which rose gradually from the river. On the face of the hills and in little ravines which led to the river, were thickets of wild roses, sarvis berry and choke cherry bushes in flower.

On that day in early June, Cutbank Valley was a lovely place. Everything was new—grass, leaves, and the scent of wild flowers. Some of the thickets had small green leaves. Buds were bursting on the big cottonwood trees. Balsam poplars had young leaves in a lovely shade of yellow green and gave forth a sweet fragrance. Wild camas was in bloom, skyblue forget-me-nots and purple geranium.

I found a well remembered trail through thickets of aspen and willows, and came to an open meadow sheltered by poplars and canopied by widespreading cottonwood trees, such as are found in some of the larger valleys of the prairies.

Here Mad Wolf, my Indian father, had his winter home—a cabin built of logs for shelter from winter storms and blizzards, also corrals and low-lying sheds for his herds of horses and cattle. But in good summer weather he and his family preferred living in tipis and to camp about on the prairies.

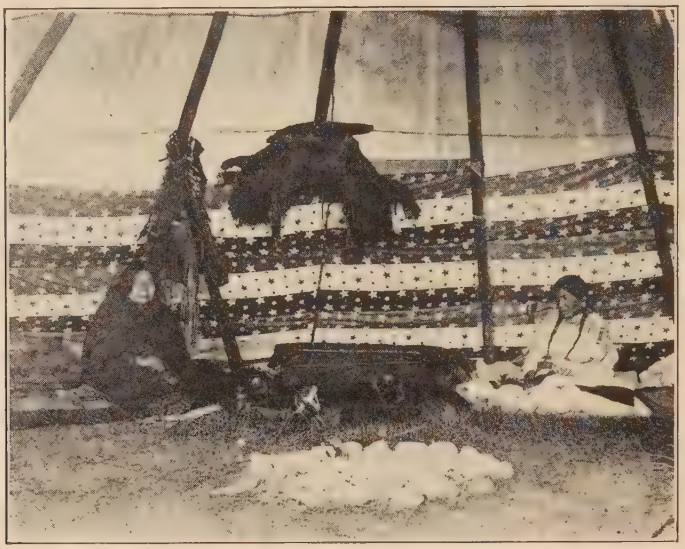
I was not surprised to find his cabin and sheds deserted. Nor was anyone home at the near-by ranches of White Grass, the medicine man, or Morning Plume. So I forded the swift river, high from the melting of deep snows in the Rocky Mountains under a warm sun, and followed a well worn trail which led westwards towards the Rockies. I expected to find Mad Wolf and his followers camped on high ground beyond the river valley, as was their custom in the early summer, because of high water and flies and mosquities in the sheltered valley.

Soon a large Indian camp came into view, on a high plateau with many horses feeding on the surrounding hills. I crossed a broad plain and soon found myself among smoke-colored tipis which were pitched in confusion, with wagons and equipment scattered about. Indians came from the lodges to stare at the white man. I saw strange faces and a few that were familiar. There were exclamations of surprise and I heard a voice call: "Look! A-pe-ech-eken has come back," (White Weasel Moccasin.)

An Indian directed me to a section, where the blood relatives of the Mad Wolf family were camped together. Here I was welcomed by my old friends, Middle Calf, Morning Plume, and Bear Child; they were of the old generation and associates of Mad Wolf. They shook hands, but kept looking at me strangely. They said: "Here

is A-pe-ech-eken." Women and children ran out from the tipis with exclamations of wonder. I heard them say: "Hai-ya! How is this! No one ever expected to see him again."

Soon came an unexpected explanation for their mysterious welcome. Before me stood the large lodge of Mad Wolf, my Indian father, with its decorations of stars and constellations. I lifted the door and entered.



Interior of Mad Wolf's Lodge.
Beaver Bundle Lies on Ground Between Mad Wolf's Wife (Left) and His Daughter (Right)

Mad Wolf was not there, but his wife and daughter were home. They gazed at me strangely, as upon one returned from the dead. Neither spoke; they sat silently without a word of greeting. Then the old woman hid her face; and her daughter, whose name was Strikes On Both Sides, said in a low voice: "Mad Wolf, my father, is dead and we thought you were dead too. He told us this before he died."

Finally the old woman raised her head and looked at me; she could not believe I was still alive. Then the recollections of former years were too much for her; she bowed her head and wept; her long hair touched the ground and covered her face. After that no one spoke. There was silence so long, I left them and went outside the tipi.

It was a lovely summer day. The sky was covered with white

fleecy clouds, the air over the plains and surrounding hills fairly sparkled it was so clear. In the west rose the majestic summits of the Rocky Mountains, and north the massive grass-covered ridge of the Hudson Bay Divide—an unbroken line of hills and table-lands against the horizon.

The surroundings were the same, prairies and hills and everlasting mountains, but my Indian father was gone. The camp was changed and the Indians too. Wagons and wall tents among the tipis. Tin cans and debris lying about and things in confusion; Indians of the younger generation in modern clothes.

Soon I returned to the lodge and found the wife of Mad Wolf waiting, seated upon her couch and smoking a red stone pipe as if nothing had happened. She directed me to the back of the lodge, Mad Wolf's seat in former years and the place of honor in a tipi. She smoked a few moments, then said: "When you first came into the lodge, we thought you were a spirit. Before Mad Wolf died, he told everyone you were dead. This was revealed to him in a dream and he announced it to the tribe. He said: 'A-pe-ech-eken, my white son is dead. He died fighting bravely in battle.'

Then the old woman told me about the death of her husband. She said:

DEATH OF MAD WOLF

"Mad Wolf went to the Sand Hills in the moon when grass becomes green. Just before he died four large crosses of light appeared about the moon—the sign a great chief is going to die. He went before sunrise, on the morning of the fourth day when day was beginning to dawn.

"We did not know there was anything the matter, until he asked his friend, Middle Calf, to go for a ride on the prairie. He told Middle Calf he felt badly and thought the ride might make him better. Later that same day he felt so ill, we sent for the doctors, White Grass and Ear Rings. But they did him no good. Mad Wolf kept getting worse. Then Ear Rings, the medicine man, said to him: 'Mad Wolf, you had better make your farewell talk. Say what you want to have done with your horses and cattle and anything else; your sickness is hard to cure and it is not likely you will get well.'

"But Mad Wolf would not give up. He did not trust the white doctor at the agency and asked for a woman doctor, Snake Woman, wife of his friend, Morning Plume. She gave him a drink made out of herbs and roots. It did him no good, so we called in Three Bears, another doctor.

"Mad Wolf was restless and in pain. He could not lie still. At early dawn of the fourth day, he raised himself suddenly and said: 'I want to go into the open and breathe again the fresh air.'

He went outside but came back quickly. He said: 'I saw the ghost of my dead friend, Double Runner. He is outside now and says he is waiting for me. He wants me to go along with him to the Sand Hills.' Middle Calf and his wife and Morning Plume and his wife were with me through that night.

"Just before daybreak Mad Wolf again went outside the tipi, and we heard him talking. I ran out and found him kneeling with his face towards the rising sun and praying to Morning Star who was high in the sky; it was almost time for the sun to rise.

"I heard Mad Wolf say: 'Wait! I am going with you.' No one was there, so I stood close to him and heard him say: 'Look! There is the ghost of Double Runner. Do you not see him? He is waiting at the edge of the woods. He wants me; it is now time for me to go.'

"Morning Plume came out and held Mad Wolf in his arms. Then Mad Wolf gave up. He was going fast. He held both my hands and I saw he was trying to say something. I leaned close and heard him whisper: 'I love you and Morning Plume also.'

"Those were the last words of Mad Wolf. He died, and his spirit passed across the heavens by the Wolf Trail (Milky Way), the path running north and south in the sky."

After the old woman finished her story, there was silence for a while. Then she knocked the ashes from her pipe. She went to the back of the lodge and brought forth a parfleche,* from which she took a buckskin bag decorated with beads and sacred red paint. Slowly she untied the thong, and, leaning towards the firelight produced an eagle feather, old and worn. She handed it reverently to me and said: "Mad Wolf wore this when he went to war. He always fastened it in his hair. It was his medicine feather; it had supernatural power to protect him in battle; it is sacred." Then she said with feeling: "I want you to keep this now; Mad Wolf thought a lot of it; I always kept it safely."

THE CUTBANK CAMP

The women pitched my traveling lodge near the Mad Wolf tipi. It was small and easy to handle. My friend Big Eyes had given it to me many years before. It had picture records on the cover, painted by his wife who had a reputation as a decorator of tipis. Now it was of interest to the entire camp. They were glad to see it, for Indians do not forget. Many came—men, women, and children. They walked round and round, reading the pictures as we would a story. I heard them say: "It is the lodge of a chief, no other tipi in the camp has so many records of war and hunting and important events."

*A rawhide case.

Cutbank Camp and Lodge of Author

The design of my tipi originated in a dream of Big Eyes. The top was painted yellow to represent the heavens, in which were colored discs for the constellations of the Pleiades and Great Bear, with the Sun and Morning Star at the back.

At the bottom the earth was represented by a circle of discs for Dusty Stars (puff balls which grew in circles on the prairies were called "dusty stars"). In front and on both sides of the door were the peaks of the Rocky Mountains. Between top and bottom were the most important events in the life of Big Eyes, represented by figures of men and animals and Indian camps, painted in red, yellow, and black. There was an attack by a band of hostile Sioux, and fights with other Indian tribes.

On the north side was an interesting record—a fight with a band of grizzlies in the Rocky Mountains. Big Eyes was sticking his knife into a she-grizzly, which tore him with teeth and claws, then left him for dead and attacked his horse.

After sundown a band of young men gathered to practice songs which they would sing in the circle-camp of the sun dance. They were Hair-Parters, or Grass Dancers, an association of young men, who held their meetings through the winter months, and a public ceremony at the time of the sun dance. Snatches of their songs floated across the camp on the still evening air, accompanied by the drums which they beat steadily and in perfect rhythm.

In a near-by lodge a medicine man was doctoring a sick person. He beat upon his medicine drum, then danced about the inside fire, blowing and grunting and snorting "woof" "woof" like a bear. His power to heal came to him in a dream through the grizzly bear.

Then visitors came to my tipi. First Little Dog, the war chief, always smiling and good natured—his chief characteristic and thus shall I always remember him. Spotted Eagle, the old medicine man, came with his friend Big Moon, a leader of the Brave Dog Society. They were dressed in their best. But instead of their old time native costumes in which they gave the impression of being a superior type

Spotted Eagle and Big Moon

of men, they now wore a modern and grotesque combination. Big Moon had a battered silk hat which was much too small with a bright red handkerchief for a band, crowning a yellow painted face. He wore his hair in braids, white shell earrings, brown corduroy suit, and an American flag draped about his waist.

Spotted Eagle, the head medicine man of many a sun dance, wore a dirty soft felt hat, soiled cotton shirt, blue cotton overalls, and a striped blanket about his waist. These incongruities were amusing, but it was depressing to see two prominent chiefs of strong mental caliber innocently making themselves so ridiculous. In these queer costumes they now appeared at all formal tribal gatherings.

Powder Bull, a prominent chief, came to my tipi together with his friend Medicine Bull, whom I remembered as one of the Weather Makers at former sun dances. They brought articles of beadwork and stayed until late, lying comfortably by my fire, gazing into the flames and watching the shadows on the tipi walls. They were good comrades, both with a sense of humor and showed keen appreciation of jokes.

Powder Bull told of a practical joke played on a prominent chief who was disliked. He said: "There was a blind man well known in the Blackfoot camp. He was sociable and liked nothing better than to be taken along when people went to visit friends. A young Indian who was fond of joking, led him one day to the lodge of the unpopular chief who had a reputation for being stingy. Food was set before

him, it was gooseberries and fat, greasy and sour, nothing he liked.

They left this inhospitable place and the blind man asked to be taken to the lodge of a friend. But his guide walked him around for a while and then led him back to the same place. As soon as he entered, the blind man complained of the food he was given. He said: "That stingy old chief gave me sour stuff; it was not fit for a coyote to eat."

It was late when my Indian visitors departed and I lay alone in the tipi, wrapped comfortably in blankets, listening to the characteristic sounds of the camp. The Hair Parters were now singing and dancing with jingling bells and beating of drums. I heard the gutteral talk of Indians in near-by tipis, crying of young children, barking of dogs and neighing of horses; the roar and rushing of the river flowing swiftly from the mountains; the wind as it rose and fell, whistling among the tops of my lodge poles and humming against the ropes.

I thought of the great change that had come over the tribe in the years since I left them, the signs of decay and uncertainty for the future. What would become of this childlike, primitive people, without means of support in a cold northern climate, unsuited for agriculture because of the high altitude and short growing season, subject to drought and sudden cold in the summer and blizzards in winter; where white men had a hard time to make a living. Their wise leaders were dead—White Calf, the head chief, Mad Wolf, Running Crane, Little Plume, and the scout Siksikaikoan. They were now the wards of an unsympathetic government politically corrupt. They were surrounded by white communities which held Indians in contempt; the prey of white liquor peddlers who demoralized them, and of white traders who took advantage of them. Under these depressing influences the whole moral tone of the Indian's life was undermined.

There was now a feeling of resentment between the old generation of Indians and their children who came under the influence and teaching of white people. The young generation were adopting modern ways. They no longer spoke their native tongue and took no interest in the ancient customs and lore of their fathers. They made light of their old religion after the manner of white men and were indifferent to its preservation.

The government played into the hands of youth by removing all that was elevating of the old Indian culture, while the undesirable things of white civilization were permitted and encouraged. The sale of alcohol to Indians was against the law but not enforced. Gambling, whiskey drinking, and horse racing were freely indulged in and tended to demoralize the tribe. And the government helped widen the breach

between the old generation and the young, by interfering with their religious ceremonies. Thus the white man deprived the Indians of their religion and helped break down their native social structure and gave them nothing to take its place. The old generation saw this. It added to their resentment against the white man and hatred of his civilization and of his ways.

In this "Cutbank Camp" where the Indians of the northern section of the reservation were assembled, they were engaged in ceremonies preparatory to the sun dance. The wife of Morning Plume was this year one of the fasting women. In the winter she had made a vow to give the ceremony with her husband in behalf of their child who was dying. She and her husband were now fulfilling this promise by fasting and prayer; while their relatives and friends joined with them in gathering beef tongues which were being consecrated as sacred food for the ceremony.

On Two Medicine River in the south, the other division of the tribe were gathered in a similar camp, giving ceremonies in behalf of their sick, and were waiting to move to the circle-camp, according to their regular ceremony of the sun dance. But there were no strong men to lead. They wavered about everything, and were like children without a leader.

Unfortunately, in this difficult period, the tribe had a new agent. Their agents were changed frequently—for political reasons, or whenever the administration at Washington changed. And as a rule agents had no previous experience with Indians; they had everything to learn. Another difficulty was the government did not have trained social workers. The agent or superintendent of a reservation needed the services of experts who were familiar with the problems confronting him and the proper methods to use. No attempt was made to administer the reservation as a business. This new agent did not understand personal contact work, nor did any of his employees. He was an elderly man, an ex-army officer, cold and hard and unapproachable, a stickler for military etiquette, and strict disciplinarian. He was stiff and did not mingle with the people, took himself seriously and was lacking in humor. Bound hand and foot by the system, he bowed to his superiors in politics, the State "machine," and was spurred on by churches and uplift organizations.

The new agent was not in sympathy with Indians. He told me he did not want to come into personal contact. He looked down upon them as savages. He had never seen a sun dance. He did not know what it was about and had an erroneous impression. His mind was closed. He spoke of their religious ceremonies as "heathenish rites."

There were different rumors in the camp, as to what their new "father," as they called their agent, would allow them to do. Vows had been made in behalf of the sick and dying and it was now too

late to withdraw. It was believed misfortune would come, if these vows were not fulfilled.

As a result of conflicting rumors, everything was at a standstill. One day the Indians would come to a decision as what they would do about their ceremony and the next day would change it. All this time the agent did not appear in the camp, nor had he any interviews or communication with the head men. He was serenely oblivious to the difficult situation.

Finally the head men held a council. They decided that their new "father" being a stranger in their country, might not understand as to the religious nature of the ceremony they had undertaken. They sent word they wanted to meet him and talk things over. But he sent back a curt refusal through a half-breed interpreter, that he would decide for himself and would take advice from no one.

Such was the unhappy and helpless position of this once free and warlike people, together with poverty, maladjustment, lack of nourishing food and spread of disease, principally trachoma and tuberculosis. Their spirit was broken; they had not the courage to revolt. But the lack of courtesy and consideration of their agent and his employees added to their discontent.

Nothing was more irritating to the head men than to be ignored in regard to their own tribal affairs. But they were patient and appeared willing to surrender their most cherished cultural heritage.

In the meantime the life of the camp was going on. The old generation of Indians were happy when they could lose themselves in their religious ceremonies. Through them they could for the moment forget their troubles.

THE CROW WATER CEREMONY

I went to the lodge of Bear Child, an old friend and associate of Mad Wolf, to attend the Crow Water Ceremony. This was a sort of religious society or an organized cult, which was said to have originated among the Crow Indians. It was composed of both men and women who gathered together for singing and dancing. The women did most of the singing, while the men beat drums and helped in the songs. It was believed to have power to make its members wealthy, to fulfill their desires, and to cure the sick.

It was a warm sunny day and the front of the lodge was thrown open, ready to receive the crowd of dancers. When it was time for the ceremony to begin, Bear Child carried his sacred bundles to the tipi, beating on his drum as a signal for the Indians to assemble. Many came—men, women, and children.

Bear Child, as leader, sat at the back and in the center. I stood outside, but Bear Child invited me to enter, and the Indians who were

Crow Water Ceremony

with him in the ceremony called to me: "Yes, come join our circle and help us in the songs." Some of the members were—Arrow Head, Medicine Weasel, Bull Child, Short Robe, Takes Gun, Many Tail Feathers, and Ross White Grass.

The latter was a handsome young Indian, son of White Grass, the well known medicine man. Ross was of the younger generation and had been to school. He wore white man's clothes which were incongruous amid such primitive surroundings, especially as his forehead was painted bright yellow with four red lines, which were said to represent the gift he brought to the medicine. The drum he used in beating time with the songs had a painted design and small stones inside which rattled as he drummed. Young White Grass represented a type of the young generation which had been educated in white men's schools and returned to the reservation without employment and nothing to do. He found himself acquiring only the vices of civilization—his tribe worsted in deals with white men over lands and goods, and generally ill treated from their standpoint by the government. He felt deeply his inferiority before the domineering white men. His early trust in the "all-wise" white man turned to resentment, suspicion, and enmity. He sympathized with the old generation of Indians, their religion satisfied him and he turned back to them.

Bear Child, who was the leader of this ceremony in which Ross White Grass was taking part, was seated behind a kind of altar made of juniper, with green cottonwood branches at the head and sides. It was made by cutting away the grass, forming three sides with an

open space towards the east. On the soft earth in the center was painted a yellow ball for the Sun and a blue crescent for the Moon. At the front and bending towards the west was a spray of juniper for the setting sun.

The face of Bear Child was painted yellow. In the center of his forehead was a black ball which he said represented the Thunder, and green zigzag lines across his forehead and down over his temples for lightning. His own personal medicine was the Thunder. In front of him as leader were many medicine bundles—bird skins and feathers decorated with beads and colored ribbons. They were laid in rows and were brought by members of the society. The women sat next to the men and completed the circle. They were the wives of the men who were members and were the only women present. They were dressed in bright colors, red, blue and yellow. The shoulders and backs of the waists of their dresses were covered with colored glass beads and small bells attached. They wore inlaid beaded belts studded in places with brass headed tacks. Beaded leggings and moccasins matched the patterns of their dresses.

The women did most of the singing, while the men beat drums and helped in the songs. They sang and prayed to the Sun, Moon, and Morning Star. The dances consisted of women standing in line in front of the men who sang and drummed, holding their medicines in the right hand as they danced. They extended the arm with the medicine and swayed their bodies to and fro.

After the Crow Water ceremony, I asked Little Creek, the husband of Mad Wolf's daughter, to go with me to see his mother-in law. He said it was not proper for him to call on her under any circumstances. It was contrary to tribal custom and she would be seriously offended. He said it would be better for me to call on the old woman and find out for myself; ask her if she would not be embarrassed to meet her son-in-law face to face.

I went to the Mad Wolf lodge and found her at home. I asked if it were true she was unwilling to meet her son-in-law. She said: "The old generation taught us we should feel ashamed with our sons-in-law; it is an old custom handed down in the tribe. I had another son-in-law who once came unexpectedly into a lodge where Mad Wolf and I were attending a ceremony. He was so sorry to have caused me the humiliation of meeting him face to face, that he gave me a good bay horse to make amends. It is the custom for a son-in-law to pay."

A chief named Many White Horses of the old generation sent word that he wanted to see me. So Little Creek and I went together to his lodge. He was called "Many White Horses", because his herd was composed entirely of white horses. He made a specialty of them

"Many White Horses"

and wanted no other color. I saw them feeding on the prairie near his lodge.

Many White Horses was prominent in the tribe. He was now old and gray, but he still rode horseback and looked after his large herd of white horses. He had a narrow face, prominent nose, and peaked head—unusual in an Indian. Instead of a headdress or hat, he always wore a handkerchief of bright colors.

His interest in seeing me, was to sell a rawhide lariat, which he said was of buffalo hide and very old, having been handed down from buffalo times. I looked it over carefully and found pieces of white hair showing in places on the inside. I pointed this out and to let him down easily, asked if it were made from the skin of an albino buffalo. This was to be tactful, instead of saying it was from the hide of a domestic white cow, for an albino buffalo of the old days was rare and valued highly by the Indians. Many White Horses looked at me sharply, to see if I were making fun. But I made no sign. He felt guilty, I knew from his expression. He put the lariat away and said nothing more about it.

His wife brought forth several small beaded sacks. They were used as charms by children. Worn about their necks for good luck and to ward off illness. For boys the charms were in the shape of a snake and for girls a lizard. She said they contained pieces of the umbellical cord which were taken at childbirth. Mrs. White Horses said: "The women of the white race in your country probably throw them away, but they are valuable to ward off sickness from children. You had better take some of these charms with you to your home and

show white women how to use them." She had the true missionary instinct.

With Little Creek and old Morning Plume, I was on my way through the camp to visit the lodge of Last Gun of the White Calf family. We were joined by White Grass, the aged medicine man, so we all went together.

We found Last Gun at home, also his mother, Black Snake Woman, who was known as the youngest wife of the deceased head-chief White Calf.

The lodge was crowded with women and children and more were arriving. Middle Calf came with his family, and Rides Behind. The lodge was thronged to overflowing. It turned out they all came for a feast. Last Gun had just killed a steer; according to Indian custom, his relatives and friends gathered without invitation to help eat it up. They would stay until the supply was finished. This was the way in the tribe and their idea of generosity. Everything was owned in common, and a man was honored for being open handed. Everyone dreaded the stigma of being known as selfish or stingy.

Last Gun's tipi was decorated with symbolic pictures on the cover. Black Snake Woman said they bought it from Blood Indians in the north for a large herd of horses. It was known as a Painted Tipi, and its value to the family consisted in its supernatural power to ward off sickness and misfortune to the inmates. The scheme of decoration originated in the dream of Morning Chief, a Blood Indian.

There was a figure at the back which designated it as the Buffalo Rock Tipi. The top was painted black to represent a cloudy sky at night, with a cross for the Morning Star at the back. On the ears were clusters of discs for the Bunch Stars and Seven Persons (constellations of the Pleiades and Great Bear) with buffalo tails attached to the ear poles.

Under the black top were four parallel red circles for trails of the thunder or lightning. At the bottom mountain peaks were represented and a broad red band with yellow discs for Dusty Stars.

After the feast the Indians sat about the lodge fire. The men on the north side of the fire, the women across from them with the children. The men had a large red stone pipe which they passed to and fro; the women a smaller pipe which they too smoked in turn. All had plenty to eat and were light-hearted and happy. They did not talk loud and when one was speaking the others listened. Everyone was now in a good humor and stories were told.

White Grass, the old medicine man, whose nickname was "Shorty," told one after the manner of the men of the old generation. He had good standing as medicine man for many years, because of his knowledge of ceremonies and handling of sacred bundles. He was a great talker and liked to tell stories of the old days, when his tribe

Buffalo Rock Tipi

were free to wander and had many famous chiefs and wise men. He spoke deliberately and in a low voice, using his hands freely in graceful gestures. He told an ancient tale about an Indian who went to live with the wolves. He said:

THE MAN WHO LIVED WITH A WOLF PACK

"There was a man who had two wives. He could not live in the camps, because his wives made him jealous. So he took them away from other men, to a lonely place far off on the prairie. He used to go every day to the summit of a hill, where he sat for a long while on a buffalo skull and watched the surrounding country. Meanwhile his wives were lonely; they had no one to talk to. They decided to make way with their husband, so they could return to the Indian camp and be with other men.

"One day when their man was off hunting, the two wives went to the hill and made a trap. They dug a deep pit and covered it over with sticks and grass, putting the buffalo skull back in its place, so their husband could not see the pit.

"That evening the man came home from his hunt. He went to his lookout on the hill and fell into the trap. When the women knew their husband was caught, they took down their lodge and moved to a big Indian camp. They pretended to mourn for their husband as dead; they said he had gone on a hunt and never came back.

"Now when the man fell into the pit, he shouted for help. He thought his wives would hear, but no one came. It happened that a gray wolf passed by. He saw the man in the pit and pitied him. He ran to the summit of a hill and howled, north, south, east and west: 'Ah-o-o-o-o-o! Ah-o-o-o-o-o-!', until wolves and coyotes came running and badgers too. The big wolf showed them the man in the pit and told them to dig.

"Just before they came to the man, the big wolf said: 'Hold on, my children, you intend to have this man for your brother, but I want to adopt him as my son.'

"To this they all agreed, so the big wolf went into the pit and pulled the man out. Now this wolf was the leader of the pack; he was larger than all the others and had wonderful power. The man became his son and went to live with him. He wore no clothes, and long hair grew over his body. He had long claws on hands and feet and looked like a wolf.

"One time a band of Indians came into that country to hunt. They killed many buffalo by driving them over a cliff. But the wolves and coyotes came and ate their meat. The Indians set traps, but could not catch a single wolf. It was because a man was with that pack, they saw his tracks and knew he ran with the wolves.

"Then the Indians baited their traps with good meat. They hid themselves and watched. They saw a man come with the wolf pack and spring all the traps. With their lariats they roped him and took him to camp. Then some of the Indians recognized him. They said: 'This is the man who was jealous of his wives and got lost.' And the wolf-man told them his story. Then they turned him loose and he went back to live with the wolves."

After the story I started a discussion about the names of stars. I asked where the son of Morning Star was in the night sky; the old people called him Scarface.

Black Snake Woman said he was the large star seen in the morning above the horizon. Last Gun said she was wrong, Scarface was the star in the north (he referred to it as "the-star-that-never-moves", or North Star). Middle Calf said they were both wrong; that Scarface is a small star near Morning Star.

Then White Grass, the aged medicine man was angry at their display of ignorance of Indian lore. He put an end to the story telling and further discussion by a tirade against the new order of things. He said they were all liars; they no longer knew about the old stories

and old times; the only people who really knew about these things were all dead. He continued: "Nowdays you tell the old legends and traditions as you imagine them yourselves. You have them badly mixed; you are all wrong and no one remembers the truth."

Thus White Grass spoke his mind and relapsed into silence. He was one of the old generation who was heart-sore at the way their affairs were going to pieces. But the rest laughed and took it as a joke. It was not important; they were not interested in the old tales, which no longer counted in their lives.

With the Mad Wolf family I sat outside their tipi and saw a glorious sunset. Along the horizon in the northwest, appeared two golden streamers extending to the zenith. They were golden bands of light which slowly dissolved into many small streamers, and the entire sky from west to north faded into a golden glow.

The Indians looked in silence. Little Creek was the only one who spoke. He said: "We know that a yellow sunset is a sign of heat and red a sign of high wind. The days will now be clear and warm."

Then we went inside and gathered about the lodge fire. The old woman sat smoking her red stone pipe. Strikes On Both Sides, her daughter, by the light of the fire, was finishing a set of new lodge-pins for my tipi, decorating their carved tops with the conventional red paint.

An Indian song was heard in the distance, coming nearer and nearer—a love song with wild melody. I asked about it and Little Creek said:

"A woman sang it just before she tried to kill herself. This happened on Two Medicine River where there are high cliffs. She was a married woman and unhappy. She secretly loved another than her husband. She climbed to the summit of a cliff in view of the camp. They saw her before she jumped and heard her sing this song:

'My lover is gone and I no longer care to live.'

"It happened that she wore a large robe which broke her fall and she was not injured. Her husband was a good natured man and did not cast her off. He said: 'Inasmuch as her lover is dead I won't get mad. But I don't want it to happen again'."

Little Creek told of another Indian who tried to commit suicide, saying: "A brother of Little Dog, the war chief, had an only child who died. The father and mother went into mourning and did not eat. They kept this up until one day the man said to his wife:

'Cook some food, I am hungry. There is no use abusing ourselves any longer.'

"The woman was angry and said to her husband: 'You don't care much for our dead child if you talk that way.'

"Replied he: 'I will show you how much I care."

"He went to a cliff overlooking the river valley and jumped. He was so badly injured he has been a cripple ever since."

Then Little Creek said to me: "Instead of traveling about, you had better remain here with us; take a woman and settle down; trade horses and cattle like we do."

His wife Strikes On Both Sides thought this was a good joke and began to laugh. But the old woman took it seriously. She did not even smile and her only comment was: "We know you were a good friend of Mad Wolf. I always feel glad to see you in our camp, and would be lonesome if you went away.'

After that nothing was said for awhile, they all sat gazing into the lodge fire. Then the old woman began rummaging among the robes and bundles at the back of the tipi. She brought forth a parfleche and took out some relics carefully put away in painted buckskin bags. She sat loking at them quietly in the dim firelight, then turned them over to me for safe keeping.

They belonged to Mad Wolf, she said; everything else was buried with him. There was a bone whistle with which he led his ceremonies. It had a small beaded bag attached with some of his teeth. There was also a pair of beaded strips which the old woman opened for me to see the pattern, and explained how she and Mad Wolf got them when they went north to visit the Blood Indians; Mad Wolf always had her keep them safely, expecting to use them some day for a fine war suit of buckskin.

Time was passing and still the head men of the camp did not know what they were going to do about giving the sun dance. They were not even sure they would be allowed to meet together in the circle-camp. It depended upon their agent and he held himself aloof. There was a rumor he had left the reservation and gone to Helena.

I was weary of waiting and asked Little Creek to take his team and wagon and go with me for a trip into the south to visit Indian friends. If the agent should allow the ceremony and the circle-camp, we could return in time.

The morning of our departure from the Cutbank camp, we were ready for an early start, but our horses were missing. It always seemed as if Indian horses had an uncanny instinct of hiding themselves the mornings they were needed for a journey. The sun was high, when they were finally driven into camp by two Indian boys, Small Otter, grandson of Mad Wolf, and his chum, Rides A Black Horse.

Strikes On Both Sides took down my traveling lodge and helped store it in the wagon, together with provisions and camp equipment.

Little Creek rode in the wagon and drove the team, while I followed on horseback. That was the way we always traveled, so I might be free to wander on the prairie and see the flora and fauna as we went along.

The day was cloudless. No haze or smoke over prairies or mountains. The air sparkling, and with brilliant sunshine. Little Creek was ahead, steering towards the southern horizon, moving slowly in the heavy Studebaker wagon towards a distant sky line. All that day the landscape was the same—prairies in all directions, yet the details were ever changing, with long billowy slopes covered with rich grass and wild flowers, rising into hills and long ridges, then flattening out and sinking into an endless plain.

Finally we came to the summit of a massive ridge higher than the surrounding country, where I had a view of the prairie for many miles and westward to the forests of the snow-covered Rockies. On the summit I waited for an Indian family with team and wagon, slowly climbing the long hill on their way north. They knew my Indian name, were friendly and wanted to talk. They had been on a visit to Sun River and were on their way home. They pointed out the landmarks of the country and the mountain peaks which they called by their Indian names. I waited until Little Creek was a mere speck in the distance, going rapidly down the southern slope into the valley of Two Medicine River. But the road was now smooth and free from stones; I overtook him by riding at a gallop, passing through a lovely prairie valley watered by a small stream. On all sides were rich meadows of grass and wild flowers—blue lupine, camas, wild roses of many shades of color.

Near Two Medicine the face of the country changed. High bluffs came into view along the river valley, pinnacles and rocks of fantastic shapes. We saw the cliffs of a piskun or buffalo trap, over which the Indians in former days drove herds of buffalo.

We descended into the valley and rode along the broad-sweeping river, through thickets of aspen and willows and beautiful groves of cottonwood.

Hidden away among the trees of the valley, was the Catholic Mission; and stretching along the green banks of the river were Indian ranches, with barbed wire fences, rude log cabins, sheds and corrals for horses and cattle. White tipis were pitched by some of the cabins, which Indians of the old generation used in preference to houses.

We traveled in the cool of the evening until late; crossed a high plateau south of Two Medicine River, and came into the broad basin of Badger Creek.

We camped for the night on the grassy shore of Badger Creek, a stream of ice cold mountain water with excellent fishing. I caught

a mess of native trout, which Little Creek cooked over the fire and we had them for supper, on the bank within sound of the rippling stream.

After that we put more wood on the fire and talked. There was a golden sunset and the air became chill. Little Creek after tending our horses for the night, crawled under the wagon and made his bed there.

I slept on the grassy bank of the stream, where I saw the lingering light of the sunset in the northwest, and two brilliant planets in conjunction near the horizon. They were the last thing I remembered before I fell asleep and slept dreamlessly until day began to light up the blue haze along the eastern horizon.

After a plunge in the cold water of the creek we had breakfast. Then went to visit the Old Agency near-by, a dreary and deserted place well named by the Indians "Country of the Dead."

Indian Graves of Today
(Deserted and Forgotten)

On the plain surrounding the empty buildings were whitened bones of horses and cattle, and Indian graves deserted and forgotten, human bones and skulls scattered about, dragged far and near by wolves and coyotes.

The delapidated buildings were surrounded by a high and weather beaten stockade, after the manner of trading posts and forts in the early days for protection from Indians. The log houses and sheds were tumbling down, but the stockade was still intact; against it the sand was piled in high drifts, carried by the heavy winds which blow continually over the exposed plain. The surroundings were gloomy and terrible, the scene of starvation of the Indians, after the sudden disappearance of the buffalo, then their only means of support; also of the smallpox epidemics.

We saw the grave of Four Bears, a famous medicine man. It was marked by an old wagon box overturned upon the prairie, with the skeleton exposed to view.

Four Bears was a magician and Weather Maker and had power to clear the skies. His power for healing the sick was so wonderful that his medicines were handed down.

Little Creek told a strange story about his death. He said:

"Before Four Bears died he told his watchers that his spirit would talk with them. He died and his body was placed for burial in a wagon box according to his request.

"On the way to the grave, his followers heard a voice speaking. It came from the wagon and they believed it was the spirit of the dead Four Bears. In their haste to get away, they overturned the wagon and fled. They left the body on the prairie under the wagon box and never went back."

White Grass, the aged medicine man, stopped at our camp to make a friendly visit. He was on his way to the lodge of Drags His Robe, a prominent chief, for the purpose of conducting the ceremony of a Medicine Pipe which was being taken over.

Then another member of the old generation, Heavy Shield, arrived and sat by our camp fire, waiting for dinner. He sat quietly until Little Creek began grinding coffee. Then to our astonishment he started to go in a hurry. He forgot all about hunger in his superstitious fear of the coffee mill. A medicine man once warned him against staying any place where a coffee mill was in use. It would have an evil effect, he said, and might even cause his death. He would not wait to eat, but mounted his horse and rode away.

After our evening meal, Little Creek and I went to the home of an old warrior named Skunitaps (Strong). He lived near-by in a small log cabin with sod roof and dirt floor. He and his wife, Different Bear Woman, were both blind from trachoma, but in spite of their troubles they were both cheerful and merry and full of good humor. It was a warm summer evening, but they preferred to sit inside their ill ventilated cabin which was overheated by a stove.

Strong was a venerable man with long gray hair and clean cut Indian features. He liked to tell stories of old times, especially war

experiences. I watched his kindly face as he talked; it was hard to realize he had been a famous warrior in his day.

He pointed to an eagle feather hanging on the wall. He said it was given to him by the Sun Above in a dream, while sleeping in the mountains. He always took it to war and wore it in many hard fought battles; it was his talisman and always kept him safe.

Little Creek told him I was the adopted son of Mad Wolf, so he told the following story of a war expedition he made with my Indian father.

A War Story

He said: "I was once with a war party with Mad Wolf. We came upon a camp of seventy lodges of the Flathead Indians. In the fight they got the best of us. When I saw there was small chance of escape, I made a vow to the Sun, that if I came from that fight alive, I would give a feast and ceremony to the Medicine Pipe of my brother Red Eagle. I never had a war song, but I kept shouting and fighting; and all the time made my way towards the Blackfoot lines. In this way I escaped.

We came safely back to our country. The Blackfoot camp was then on the Missouri River, near Fort Benton. I gave the promised feast to the Medicine Pipe three days after I got home—everyone who came to the lodge got a pot of sarvis berries and choke cherries. I took the Medicine Pipe and danced with it for three hours before the assembled people."

By this time a party of girls and men of the younger generation who were strolling about, stopped at the cabin and stood in the doorway listening. They had no respect for the old man, but talked aloud and made fun of him. They laughed at his tales of the old days and said jokingly to each other; that if Strong kept on much longer telling such big stories, they would have him arrested and put in jail. The old warrior could not withstand the ridicule of the younger generation, he became so confused and self conscious, we left him and returned to our camp.

In most of the homes we visited, the Indians were living in primitive dwellings—tents, rough shacks, and log cabins, like the poorer whites of the frontier many years ago. The tipis of the old generation were better ventilated and more sanitary than the log cabins which replaced them. The houses were small, of one or two rooms and poorly constructed, ill kept and in bad repair, with leaking roofs, dirt floors and no protection from flies—sources of contagion and discomfort. They had little light and no ventilation, small windows which were never opened or perhaps no windows at all.

In cold or wet weather it was hard for the women to keep cabins

clean and in good order. The rooms were small and often congested. Whole families visited friends, according to Indian custom, and sometimes stayed indefinitely. They still had the primitive custom of eating, sitting, and sleeping on the floor. Blankets and quilts which were used at night for sleeping, became seats beside their floor beds for meals.

They lived on a restricted diet and were undernourished. It consisted mostly of meat, bread made of flour, baking powder, and water fried in deep fat, a little sugar and tea, no milk and few green vegetables.

Some never had enough to eat and others alternated between starvation and the primitive habit of gourmandizing, which was helped along by the government system of rations. They were hungry when they got their semi-monthly supply of provisions, which they and their friends quickly ate up. Whole families would eat from a common dish with their fingers. Sometimes they might have a few spoons or cups for the use of everyone, which they did not wash after using, but waited until it was time to use them again.

Under such conditions, it was difficult to escape contagion from tuberculosis and trachoma which were prevalent. They spit freely on stoves and floors in unventilated and overheated rooms. Having never been taught, they did not realize the danger of contagion. As a rule they believed that disease came from certain acts and disobedience to the rules of their medicines. In many ways the Blackfoot were like irresponsible and light-hearted children, making merry over their poverty and misfortune..

Maka, a member of the old generation, joked about his diet, because it was so poor and without variation. He and his wife had for a steady diet, tea without sugar, flour fried in fat, which they ate with syrup three times a day; they got tired of it they said, but were too poor to provide anything else.

Last Star was of middle age. He worked hard and put up some hay. But there was no market when he tried to sell it. He and his wife talked the matter over and laughed about it. It was a good joke on him, they agreed, because white men persuaded him to work hard and he got nothing for it.

Difficulties arose in Indian families throughout the reservation, because they were trying to adjust themselves to white standards. Many of the young people who returned from schools and colleges did not fit into their former life. There was a clash between the old and the new, a difficult gap between the ideals of the two generations. I heard mutterings from old men who were heart-sore and discouraged. They were baffled by the forms of white culture which were incomprehensible to them. The inner meaning was not understood.

THE NEW
Return from School, in Modern Clothes

THE OLD
Before Going to School, in Primitive Costume

This was evident on my visit to the home of White Grass, the old medicine man. His son had returned from school with his hair cut short, smartly dressed in modern clothes and with modern ideas from white associates and friends. The house of White Grass was a board shack of two rooms, perhaps larger and more attractive than most Indian homes. The floor of the room we entered was covered with a carpet of bright colors. In the center of the room was a strange and incongruous sight. The old medicine man had constructed on the new carpet, a sort of altar like the one he always used in his tipi. It was made by forming sod-walls on three sides, with an open place towards the rising sun. At one side was a place for a smudge which was burning. The base of the altar was covered with light-colored earth and had painted symbols to represent Sun Dogs, the Moon, and Morning Star. It was surrounded by a circle of dried cattle chips (dried cow dung), which had a religious significance, but was hard on the new carpet.

They also bought from a store in Browning, a set of furniture—chairs and a large double bed with springs and mattress. It cost them two steers which were turned in for trade.

But it was all a waste. They did not use the chairs and the old medicine man and his wife were more comfortable sleeping in their customary place on the floor. After restless nights in the bed, they relegated it with mattress and springs to the back yard, where I saw them exposed to the weather and fast going to pieces.

This old couple had other remnants of primitive culture which they were afraid to give up. White Grass would not allow anyone to pass in front of him while smoking, lest it cause his death; while his wife was afraid to have anyone walk behind her because it might make her blind.

We left our camp on Badger Creek and went westward across the prairie under a hot summer sun—towards the country of Heart Butte and Black Tail, where prominent chiefs of the southern part of the reservation lived. My lips became swollen and sore from the alkali dust and intense heat; the horses tortured by swarms of biting flies.

A silent Indian of the old generation named Chief All Over, joined us on the way. For a long while he rode without speaking, but suddenly came to life in passing through a hill country. He asked us to go to the summit of a hill near the road; and on the top showed us a pile of stones.

He said it marked the place of a fight long ago, between a war party of Crow Indians and the Blackfoot; he was one of the warriors who took part. He told the story dramatically with many gestures in the sign language, standing bareheaded his long gray hair falling in waves over his shoulders.

It happened in 1884, he said—the last war party of Crows that came into the Blackfoot country. He told how the Crow warriors surrounded them on the summit where he now stood. The Blackfoot dug themselves in and made a brave stand. When Chief All Over finished his tale, he removed the stones and showed us the remains of Blackfoot warriors who were killed in the fight.

We left the hill and came into Heart Butte, the sub-agency of the reservation, where there was a trading store, agency buildings, and a farmer in charge for the government. We visited a saw mill where Indians of the younger generation were at work. They gave us a warm welcome and showed astonishment at my arrival; the report of my death had been spread throughout the reservation, because of Mad Wolf's dream before he died.

We met Mountain Chief and his wife and family. He was going to conduct a ceremony that evening at the lodge of Big Beaver, and asked us to join them. It was important for him to be on hand, he said, because he had been paid in advance for his services as leader.

As we rode along, Mountain Chief told about the elopement of one of his sons with a young girl named Spotted Forehead, daughter

of Bull Plume, a Blood Indian from the north, who was visiting with his family near Heart Butte. Mountain Chief favored the match although it was a runaway. He was glad his son had secured a girl of good family for a wife. His boy was wild and she might help him to settle down. But Bull Plume felt bitterly towards the boy who he thought had stolen his daughter; it was no marriage and his daughter was disgraced.

Towards sunset we entered a lovely well-watered valley, and came to a lake where a group of white Indian tipis stood. Mountain Chief pointed out the large lodge of Big Beaver where the ceremony would take place; it was near the shore with the lodges of Iron Eater and Calf Robe.

Mountain Chief placed his tipi near that of Big Beaver, while we camped close to Mountain Chief. But this time the sun was setting and the air became suddenly cool. I stretched out on the soft prairie grass, which felt good after our long ride in the heat, and watched the Indians in their camp life.

Many horses were feeding in the meadows; and on the surrounding hills boys were rounding up the herds and driving them to water; snatches of their wild Indian songs, came across the valley on the still evening air. Two young men galloped past riding the same horse and singing a wolf song. They were off for a fast ride over the prairie to visit their sweethearts.

Then a band of Cree Indians arrived from the south. They were returning to their home in the north, after a visit with Blackfoot relatives and friends. Soon their camp fires were burning on the shore of the lake, and a party of young Cree girls strolled over to see our camp and to stare at the strange white man.

CEREMONY OF THE SWEAT LODGE

In the meantime the wife of Mountain Chief was busy with their lodge, stacking the poles and fitting the cover, building the fire and preparing the evening meal, while her husband was occupied getting ready for the ceremony. He stripped himself, brought forth paints and decorated his face and body; built a smudge and burned sweet grass for purification and chanted religious songs. On rising ground near the lodge of Big Beaver, he constructed the framework of a sweat lodge, by weaving together willow sticks in the form of an ellipse; gathered round stones for heating and built a fire. A woman with children hanging to her skirts dragged in a hide filled with cattle chips for the fire, because wood was hard to find on the prairie.

After sundown Indians arrived to attend the ceremony; and the men who were to enter the sweat lodge appeared from their tipis. They were entirely stripped, with blankets about them, which would be discarded on entering.

I had my camera ready for pictures, but Big Beaver and Iron Eater objected; they were afraid it might bring them bad luck. My friends Mountain Chief and Shoots In The Air, a tribal judge and man of influence, arrived just in time. They laughed at the fears of the others; and the venerable judge was interested to such an extent, that he suggested a position for my camera. Then kneeled for me to take him beside the sweat lodge, smoking his pipe which he handed inside for the inmates to smoke.

Four men entered for the ceremony. They spouted water on the hot stones and kept wetting their hair. Because of steam rising from the stones, the bathers kept their heads close to the ground and chanted and prayed to the Sun, Moon, and Morning Star. After an hour they came out and with shouts plunged into the lake for a reaction.

That night the air was so mild I slept outside. Heavy clouds, black and threatening, gathered suddenly over the Rockies; the air became sultry and warm. But there was only a vivid display of lightning with heavy thunder; then the clouds rolled away and the stars came out.

Next morning the inmates of Mountain Chief's lodge were astir before sunrise, preparing to break camp. But in spite of his haste, Mountain Chief delayed to tell me Indian lore. Said he: "People who have died and are unhappy in the spirit world, take the form of owls and come back to their old haunts. They travel at night and dread the sunlight, because their deeds were evil. They like to stay near forests and streams. They often come suddenly from trees and frighten horses. The worst kind of ghosts are the 'haunting spirits.' People are always afraid of them. They prowl around at night and try to harm people. They are the ones who use ghost arrows which bring sickness and death. Outside in the dark they shoot at people. They paralyze the limbs of people and make their faces crooked. I have heard ghosts make a noise at night by striking the lodge-poles. Sometimes they make a queer sound like whistling, overhead in the smoke-hole of the tipi, and sometimes they laugh. But they never come inside if a fire is burning; and they are always afraid of burning hair."

Mountain Chief then told a strange tale of a friendly Medicine Grizzly, which came to a warrior named Calf Robe. He was wounded in a fight with Snake Indians far away in the south and left behind to die. The supernatural grizzly carried the injured warrior on his broad back, until he came to the Blackfoot camp on the Marias River, then mysteriously disappeared. Calf Robe lived many years a cripple. He often told the story of his wonderful escape and it was believed throughout the tribe.

The dignified judge, Shoots In The Air, was an interested

listener together with his wife, Day Robe, and their daughter, Night In The Lodge. Every now and then the judge would interrupt with corrections, which were accepted with good grace by Mountain Chief.

Then Mountain Chief and his family left in a hurry. Soon the other lodges were taken down and all started north on important business. This was characteristic of the head-men of the tribe. They were restless and energetic, happier when on the move and busily occupied with affairs.

Little Creek and I rode eastward over the prairie, camping for the night near a piskun, which Indians of former days used in their buffalo hunts before they had firearms. They drove the herds over a perpindicular cliff, and caught the wounded buffalo in a corral at the foot. Buffalo bones covered the ground at the foot. We found arrow points and stone weapons, also signs of an old camp, where the lodges of those ancient hunters once stood.

Spotted Eagle, Medicine Man

In a river valley, we found the lodge of Spotted Eagle, the medicine man. He had come from the agency at Browning and was resting after his journey, lying naked on his couch, except for a loincloth. He was a large Indian with an imposing manner. In his youth he must have been fine looking. His wife was homely, it did not seem possible she could be the mother of their two pretty daughters. Little Creek, my guide, was on intimate terms with this family.

Spotted Eagle began a tirade against the store keepers at the agency, because they were close and hard fisted. He took horses to sell and he could get nothing for them. But Spotted Eagle had such a

keen sense of humor, he did not let dealings with white men weigh upon his spirits. He interspersed his talk about the traders with funny stories, telling things with perfect freedom, which are not often talked about by white men. Whenever he cracked a joke, he looked at me and made grimaces; and was greatly pleased when I laughed. If anything startled him he gave an odd cry, made ridiculous by a peculiar intonation.

By this time a storm from the Rockies broke suddenly over the camp, with a gale of wind which violently shook the tipi. The inside-lining was torn loose and fell upon the old medicine man. He gave his customary cry and making humorous remarks about the storm, tried to protect himself from a deluge of cold rain water which ran down the lodge poles and fell upon his naked body.

While we were waiting for the weather to clear, Spotted Eagle told stories. He began with Napi (Old Man), a strange and mythical character, Spotted Eagle liked to tell about the marvellous adventures of Old Man, because of his keen sense of humor, also because they were handed down from the ancients. He told how Old Man in his wanderings first induced men and women to mate, how he started the custom of taking scalps and his strange adventures with birds and wild animals with whom he was able to converse.

In the mean time a Blood Indian from the north, named Big Smoke, arrived and pitched his small traveling tipi. His daughter was married among the Blackfoot and he was on his way to visit her. He entered the lodge and seating himself near Spotted Eagle, listened with interest to the story telling.

Big Smoke had a peculiar way of dressing his hair—in the old style. He wore it hanging down straight and stiff and in disorder over his forehead and left eye, as described by Prince Maximilian in his early travels.

The men of the old generation of Blackfoot admired long hair and spent a great deal of time in brushing and caring for it. They used charms to increase its length.

It was dark when Little Creek and I left the lodge of Spotted Eagle and returned to our camp under the cottonwoods. The sky was still overcast after the storm; through the branches of the big trees I saw brilliant flashes of lightning. We stretched a canvas cover over our beds and turned in to keep dry. Little Creek told of a large rock not far from camp, a favorite place for lightning to strike. It had been struck so often Indians were afraid to camp in that vacinity.

When I woke next morning the storm had passed and the sky had cleared. I went for an early swim in the cold water of the river. Farther down I heard a loud splashing. It was the wife of Spotted

Eagle taking her morning bath. Then a crowd of Indian boys came for a swim, and finally Spotted Eagle himself.

He stopped at our camp, clad only in a blanket and carrying an eagle wing fan. Our wagon was packed and we were ready to start. I gave him sweet crackers which he took; then made a motion as if to throw them into the brush. But it was his idea of humor and intended for a joke; he winked at me, made a comical face and ate them with relish.

He told how he once fell in with a company of soldiers and traveled with them many days across the prairies; he never came so near starving; they were generous and gave him plenty of food, but it was only white man's food; it was no good and did not satisfy him; he longed for pemmican and dried meat.

In parting, Spotted Eagle asked me to send him the skin of a bird of bright plumage. "Something red all over," he said; it would be "strong medicine" and a great help in his ceremonies.

His last words as we rode away were: "Don't forget to send the red medicine bird." The last I saw of him, he was seated grandly in the midst of his possessions, all the work being done by his wife and two pretty daughters. I afterwards sent him a bird skin bought in a millinery store for the decoration of hats of white women.

On our way north, Little Creek pointed to a hill where Ear Rings, a well known doctor, was found dead; and told this strange tale about his death:

THE DEATH OF EAR RINGS

"When White Calf, our head-chief died of pneumonia in Washington, his body was embalmed and brought back to the Blackfoot Reservation. It lay in Browning and was viewed by many Indians. With them came Ear Rings, a friend and associate of White Calf for many years.

Ear Rings stood and gazed at the body, then spoke to the Indians, saying:

'When I looked upon the face of White Calf he smiled. Now I know he is going to take me with him to the Spirit World. Before the sun again rises I shall be dead.'

"These were the last words of Ear Rings. No one ever saw him alive after that. He mounted his horse and rode away from the agency. He did not return home, so his son Wolf Chief went to look for him. He found the saddle horse of Ear Rings wandering on the prairie without a rider; and on the following day the body of his father was discovered on the summit of that hill. No one knows what killed him. He died facing the Rocky Mountains, with

his head towards the rising sun. Two piles of stones mark the place where his body lay."

We arrived at the Indian camp on Cutbank River, and found the people still in doubt whether their agent would allow them to give the sun dance. By this time they were losing interest, because of the uncertainty of having the circle-camp.

The women straightway pitched my traveling lodge close to the tipi of the Mad Wolf family. I did not ask them to do this, and it was not the custom for Indians to serve anyone. But it was their idea of hospitality. They wanted to do the right thing by me before the tribe.

They brought a fresh pail of water and piled firewood beside my door. Takes In The Night, a daughter of Little Creek, brought me a present of a miniature squaw saddle, with a little shield and medicine cases attached. Her mother, Strikes On Both Sides, came with a bunch of strawberry plants covered with ripe fruit which she gathered in a meadow. They were all hospitable and on the lookout to do something kind.

Little Creek had some relics from the ancient Beaver Bundle of Mad Wolf. They had been replaced in the Bundle and were no longer used in the ceremony. He asked me to look them over, and, surrounded by the Mad Wolf family we examined them. I found the hoofs of a young antelope, skins of a prairie dog, squirrel, mallard duck, eagle feathers, buffalo sinew, bird wings, and pieces of bone whistles.

Then Little Creek spoke for the family and asked me to take charge of these relics. He said I should place them in the medicine case of my Iniskim, which they had given me. I could hang them all together on a tripod behind my tipi in the conventional way. They agreed this was the best thing to do. It would bring me greater power and give protection from illness and misfortune.

Then the head men of the camp held another council and decided to give the sun dance. Their agent was still away and it was too late to withdraw from the ceremony. Women had made vows to the Sun; it might bring death and misfortune if their vows were not carried out. Better to risk the disapproval of a new agent than stop the ceremony now; there was nothing harmful in the ceremony; it was for the benefit of the tribe, to help them lead better lives and to restore to health those who were ill.

So it was agreed among the leaders to go ahead. The ceremony of the tongues was finished in haste, and a messenger sent to the southern division of the tribe which was camped on Two Medicine, to move on the following day. They would all gather on the broad plain south of the agency. There the sun dance would take place.

Early next morning I was wakened by sounds of confusion—

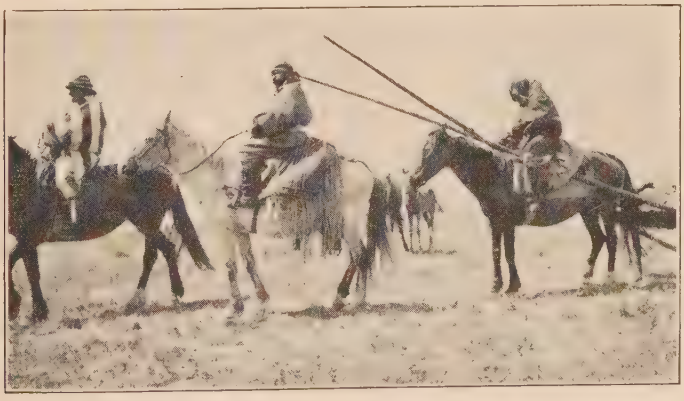
herds of horses driven into camp, shouting of herders, barking of dogs, and neighing of horses. I dressed and went out from the lodge. The sun had not risen. Along the horizon was a supernatural light—a glow of pale yellow, mingled with touches of red and gold. It spread upwards towards the zenith; the glow grew stronger and the sun rose. Its bright rays of yellow light streamed across the plain, and touched the snow-capped summits of the Rocky Mountains.

Soon a change came over the camp. Places where tipis had stood the night before were vacant now. In other places were stacks of bare poles, women were pulling away lodge covers which were flapping in the wind.

Now the camp was full of horses, some tied to wagons, others wandering loose and busily feeding. All about were piles of robes and bankets, bundles, saddles, and cooking utensils; women gathering their property together, tying up and packing on horses. Noise and confusion. Colts screaming shrilly, mares neighing, camp dogs excited and barking, howling, yelping. Boys shouting and whooping, running races, wrestling. Anxious mothers, worried by the labor of packing and looking after children and horses, calling to people in shrill voices; the crying of frightened and angry babies.

A line of wagons began to form, headed south, towards the river valley and the direction they would move to the circle-camp. Soon there was a long line of Indians in wagons piled with household goods. The old and middle aged and children were in the lead in wagons, and behind them came a throng of young men riding their best horses.

The strong voice of the herald was still heard as he rode about the camp urging the people on, saying: "Listen! Everybody hurry and



Head of the Procession, On the Way to the Sun Dance.
The Fasting Woman and Her Travois.

get ready. Now we are going to start. So the chiefs have ordered." He repeated this over and over.

Now the last families were nearly ready. They were packing furiously, ashamed to be the last. The women had a sort of pride in being ready with the others—a superstitious fear of being left.

White Grass, the aged medicine man, was in the lead. He carried a Sacred Lance wrapped in an elk-skin and attached to a pole. With him were the chiefs Middle Calf and Bear Child. They followed no road, but took a short route through the hills, towards the big flat near the agency, the meeting place agreed upon for the circle-camp.

I joined this strange procession and rode with the Mad Wolf family where I belonged. But I kept moving along the line stopping now and then to chat with friends. They liked to hear me speak in the Blackfoot tongue. A joke was always greeted with smiles and laughter. They had an unfailing sense of humor and liked any kind of repartee; it was the spirit that counted. No matter how depressed an Indian might feel, bantering always brought a laugh, and they rattled off something foolish in reply.

This journey to the circle-camp was an impressive occasion and to me deeply moving; traveling with that long line of Indians, slowly over the prairies on their way to the sun dance, their greatest ceremony—and I believed it would be the last. A strange scene for this modern age—those primitive children of nature, stone men, a last remnant of our aboriginees, soon to disappear forever and be forgotten, submerged by the onrush of a materialistic civilization.

I watched their eager, rapt faces. Forgetful for the moment of their agent and white men; oblivious to anything but the circle-camp which brought associations dear to the Indian heart—old friends, feasting and social dances, singing and religious ceremonies.

We passed through a grassy valley and climbed to the summit of a ridge. Here we had our first view of the big camp distant on the prairie—already many tipis were there and the great circle was being formed.

As soon as the Indians caught sight of the camp, they began traveling faster down the long slope. Along the line they shouted to each other with excitement—nothing escaped them, the Painted Tipis of head men, where different bands were camped, what families had arrived, and where each family belonged in the circle.

In the line was a dilapidated vehicle drawn by an aged horse, blind, and lame, hobbling painfully on three legs, with head down and eyes closed. Three aged women rode in the wagon, laughing and chattering, as excited as young girls, eager to keep up with the procession and to get quickly to the big camp. They hated being left, but the line moved too fast for them.

During the first day of the big camp there was confusion. The Indians from the north and the south did not come in two divisions as in former years when their strong leaders were alive. This time they kept straggling in, and many families were late.

Vacant places were in the camp-circle which were depressing to see. They were mostly on the north side, where prominent men had died. The families of White Calf, Mad Wolf, Bear Paw, Double Runner, Siksikaikoan, the scout, and many others were in mourning. They did not join the circle, but camped outside in the hills. They held themselves aloof and took no part in the ceremonies; it was not proper for them to be with the crowd. The bands of Small Robes and Worm People were not represented by any families; all of them were dead.

On my arrival, there was a council of the head men of the camp, as to a suitable place for my lodge,—Curly Bear of the band of Buffalo Chips, Bear Chief of the Don't Laughs, Big Moon of the All Chiefs, Bull Calf of the Bloods, White Man of the Lone Eaters, and Wades In Water of the Grease Melters. They said my tipi should be on the inside-circle among the chiefs.

In former years when Mad Wolf, my Indian father, was alive, there was no question where I belonged. I always went with his band. Now he was gone; his family were in mourning and not included in the circle. The head men of the south realized this and wanted me to camp with them. I had many friends in the south and decided to accept; I wanted to get to know them better. This was the cause of trouble; I was too popular in the camp.

They pitched my tipi on the south side, in a prominent place on the inside-circle next to the Black Buffalo Tipi—where the best families were. Now I was more prominent than ever.

Near-by were White Man in the Striped Tipi, Big Moon in the Bald Eagle Tipi, Mountain Chief, Calf Robe, and Onesta—all old friends; and they were outspoken in their expressions of good will and pleasure at my joining them.

An interesting feature of this camp-circle was a band of visiting Blood Indians from the north, who came to fulfill vows made to the Sun for people who were ill. They too were on the inner-circle and had a group of Snake Painted Tipis, which had black tops to represent a cloudy sky at night, with discs for constellations on both ears and serpents in color round the center.

My lodge was so close to Cold Body and Wolverine I could hear everything. Cold Body was dying of tuberculosis and had a cough. It was so bad he could not sleep. But his son snored contentedly through the night.

I was so interested in the camp life, I did not want to sleep, but lay awake listening to all that was going on. It was so different

from life in civilization I wanted to record everything. The striking extremes of wealth and poverty so evident in large cities were absent, but the lights and shadows of domestic joy and sorrow, of health and sickness, of pathos and humor, were all present in this Indian camp, with even sharper contrasts, because of the close association of the people.

In the lodge of Wolverine, his children were restless and a young baby cried fretfully. The mother rocked it in a little hammock cradle fastened to the lodge poles, singing an old cradle song: "Come wolf eat this baby if he don't sleep."

Beyond Wolverine, was the lodge of Okyio, a poor young man. He had one wife and their only child was dying. It grew worse in the night and a doctor came. I heard the monotonous beating of his medicine drum, not loud but very soft and regular. It had a solemn sound in the night, and continued until I saw the first sign of light in the sky.

When day was beginning to dawn, the drum of the medicine man stopped; and I knew the child had died. For a while there was stillness, not a dog barked. Then I heard the sobbing of the young mother, and soon it became a mournful wail.

With the day came a light breeze from the mountains, making a humming sound against the ropes of my lodge and the ears at the top flapped gently in the changing wind. Through the smoke-hole I saw two morning stars in the sky—bright and beautiful in the clear air of that high altitude. On the ground sounded the quick thud of horse-hoofs. It was the day herder crossing the meadow towards the hills to watch the horse herds.

Then I heard the strong voice of Elk Horn, the herald, as he rode through camp and made announcements for the day. People began talking in near-by lodges and women were preparing the morning meal.

A CHILD'S BURIAL

Soon after sunrise the women of neighboring lodges went to the tipi of Okio to help with the body. A small box was secured, the dead child was washed and dressed, wild flowers of the prairie placed in its hands and on its breast. Many Indians came to the funeral. That afternoon the solemn procession passed my tipi, going to the summit of a lonely ridge where the body was placed. The young father and mother walked close to the little box, weeping and with heads bowed.

In the meantime, the warriors of the camp were assembling, dressed in fine costumes, with feathers and war paint. They gave horseback dances and sham battles. They galloped through the

camp with shrill cries, in imitation of war parties of former days. Then the society of Brave Dogs came forth from their lodges and marched and danced and assembled to feast at the tipis of prominent chiefs.

Again I heard the continuous drumming of a doctor at work on a boy who was dying. He was the grandson of Little Plume, the famous war chief. In his behalf a woman relative had made a vow to give the sun dance. But the agent had interfered and now the boy was dying; it caused a superstitious fear.

Big Plume, the medicine man, also was dying. I heard a strange tale as to the cause of his illness; it shows the fear Indians have of disobeying the rules of their medicine bundles.

Big Plume found an old flageolet or reed pipe in a field and took it home, not knowing anything was wrong. He suddenly became ill. They could not tell what was the matter, until some one examined the place where the flageolet was found and discovered an old grave. Now Big Plume as the owner of a Medicine Pipe should not use anything that belonged to the dead. The flageolet he had found was therefore taboo. It was said to be the cause of his illness—the penalty for his disobedience.

There were signs in the sky that bad weather was coming—heavy clouds enveloped the mountains and spread over the plains. I made ready my tipi for a blow from the north, roping it to the ground on the north side, with lariat noosed round the tops of the lodge poles and fastened to strongly driven stakes. I adjusted the ears at the top and drove the pegs into the ground, so my lodge would not be overturned by the wind.

That night a heavy gale with rain and sleet came straight from the north and beat violently against the tipi. But it held fast. I built a wood fire to last through the night and went to bed.

It was not a night for sleep. I heard the wailing and crying of women, mourning for their dead. It came from all sides, distinctly through the storm. They kept it up through the night. Many families were in mourning and illness widespread. It added to the gloom of the Indians, already depressed by the ban placed upon their religious ceremonies by the agent.

In the middle of the night, Mountain Chief whose tipi was near mine, began a sort of chant in a strong voice to drive away the storm. Then his women joined in, with a chorus in a minor key. This was to add power to their prayers. They kept up this chanting and singing until day began to dawn.

Their prayers were answered later in the morning, when the

cloud banks rose over the Rocky Mountain chain and the sun was soon shining in a clear sky.

Some of the women who were in mourning, were accustomed to go daily at sunset and sunrise to lonely hills outside the camp, to weep and gash themselves with knives. They did this to excite the pity of the Great Spirit; to show their indifference to pain and their high regard for the dead. As a sign of deep mourning, they might cut off a finger, generally the first joint of the small finger. People in mourning wore old clothes and gave up painting themselves and ornaments. They kept away from public gatherings, dances, and religious ceremonies. When a prominent chief died, as in the cases of White Calf and Mad Wolf, the family lodge was placed outside the circle-camp, among the hills and at a distance from the others.

With their strong leaders dead and no one to restrain, there was confusion in the big camp. Young men of the new generation, eager for excitement rode wildly at night. For a practical joke, they lassoed the small tipi of an old woman; she lived alone and had no one to defend her. They threw a rope round the top of her lodge, the other end fastened to the horn of a saddle. The rider rode at a gallop and jerked the lodge from its foundations, leaving the old woman bewildered in bed, exposed to public view, surrounded by all of her possessions.

They played a joke on an unpopular chief, by taking a colt and pushed it into his lodge at night. Inside it made havoc in the dark, kicking and squealing and racing about.

Bad whiskey was freely distributed by white peddlers. It was against the law to sell whiskey to Indians, but there was no sign of enforcement.

The young generation were beyond control. They were returning to their families and primitive conditions, coming from distant schools and colleges. Now they had short hair, modern clothes, and manners strange. At first they made a fight and failed, as anyone would fail, without employment and exposed to the ridicule of families and friends. Quickly disillusioned, their education became a bitterness. They deteriorated morally and physically. White men took away their old culture and gave nothing to take its place.

The government failed to understand and take a sympathetic attitude towards Indian ways. No attempt was made to use what was sound and good in Indian ethics and their religion.

The agent of the Blackfoot Reservation was ignorant of Indian life and customs; and he had no experts to advise him. His assistants were incompetent to handle the difficult situation.

From the start I was at home in this big Indian camp. I was identified with the head men and everyone was friendly. They made me feel as if I belonged there and were one of them. I had access to

all dances and ceremonies, and had opportunities to make picture records that would be of great value—of ceremonies that had never been photographed and would soon vanish forever.

But one can not be sure of anything when dealing with a primitive people. Suddenly a subtle change took place which I did not realize at first. There was jealousy and dissention within the tribe.

The camp was organized according to bands of blood relatives who camped under the head men of different bands. They spoke of families as belonging to the north and south sides of camp.

I properly belonged with the north people. They were formerly on top when their leaders were alive. But the deaths of their head men was a blow to their prestige. Now they were in mourning and depressed. They no longer held the leadership and seemed to have developed a sort of inferiority complex. They realized their lowered prestige, and were jealous of the increasing power and importance of the south people.

Then the Indians of the south side became jealous and were irritated, because I returned to visit friends on the north side. I did this openly and without suspicion, intent on my work and without thought of trouble. I felt friendly towards all and knew no distinction between the people of the north and those of the south

The trouble was aggravated by the appearance of a half-breed grafter, educated at Carlisle School in the east. He spoke English fluently, and followed corrupt ideas he got from white men by demanding $300.00, or he would put me out of business. I refused and told of a letter from the Indian Commissioner at Washington granting permission. Out of spite he spread reports among the Indians that I made a lot of money through my work among them and aroused suspicion. Here a new and modern element entered into my relations with the tribe.

The circle-camp was a public place and a hive of gossip. Everyone could see what was going on. Whenever I crossed the camp and visited a lodge, it was gossiped about. If I took a picture or gave a present it was known. And everything was exaggerated.

For instance Wolf Plume and his wife who lived on the south side were old friends. She bragged to a woman of the north that I gave her a handsome present; and that woman, also of prominent family, the wife of Heavy Breast, not to be outdone by her rival, stretched things. She boasted of my fine presents to her and what I was doing for the north families. She wanted to prove that I thought more highly of her and her relatives. This had a bad effect upon the wife of Wolf Plume. Heretofore she was pleased with the present I gave her; now she was jealous, dissatisfied and angry. She no longer felt preferred above the others.

ALMOST A DUCKING

This trouble among the women had an unexpected climax. In the early morning I went to the lake for pictures of women and children coming with their water pails and dogs. First I took pictures of Morning Eagle, a famous old warrior, picketing his favorite war horse on the lake shore. Then came some women with children and dogs and buckets. It was an interesting group. I had no thought of trouble; even when I saw them whispering together in a mysterious way.

Suddenly they made a rush and tried to seize my cameras. I was taken by surprise and at a disadvantage for such an onslaught, having many things to look out for—two cameras, a tripod, cases of films and glass plates. It would be a tragedy to have my cameras damaged. With both hands filled I was in a predicament. They tried to drag me to the lake. I threatened, but it was of no avail. Then I yielded as a ruse, and they thought they were going to duck me without trouble. Quickly I wrenched loose and got away.

This incident was a shock to my feeling of security in the camp. A change had come over the tribe. Nothing like this had happened before, nor would it have happened when their old leaders were in power.

The ring leader of the women was the youngest wife of a prominent man on the north side. Later I met her face to face when visiting her husband at their tipi. She was embarrassed, uncertain what I might do. But I made no sign. She tried to make amends by presenting me with a dress tobacco pouch, which I accepted and did not allude to the affair.

Afterwards I heard a strange report that was being circulated among the Indian women about picture taking—that a white man with a camera could see through their clothes. It was said to have been started by an Indian who was jealous of a favorite wife; she was being photographed too frequently by a white man. Her husband said this white man liked to look at her through his camera, because he saw her without clothes.

I went to the lodge of Eagle Plume to attend the ceremony of a Medicine Necklace, which was being transferred in behalf of someone who was ill. In the ceremony a smudge was made of sweet grass on a hot coal; songs were sung through which the supernatuaral power of the Necklace was transferred to its new owner. The former owner was paid a horse for the charm, and gave up all benefits to be derived from it. The important part of the transfer of power was in the songs.

I never tired of watching these Indians in their camp life, night and day there was generally something going on. They were so

different from white people—as if they belonged to another world. That same morning, which was always the quietest time when few people were stirring, I saw a strangely assorted pair walk through the camp—Petanesta, an aged medicine man of the old generation, and a pretty young girl of sixteen.

CRABBED AGE AND YOUTH

He bent over her lover like and talked earnestly. In contrast to his ardent manner, the girl walked meekly with head down. They passed near and I heard the old man talking in a wheedling, coaxing tone. She was pretty and fresh looking with a slender graceful figure.

Closely following the old medicine man and his sweetheart came two prominent men, Three Bears and Black Weasel. Something unusual was taking place. Everyone turned to look and people came from the lodges.

Petanesta took the girl to his own tipi and disappeared inside, followed by Three Bears and Black Weasel. He needed the moral support of the two chiefs to get her back. She was his wife and I found out how it happened.

The old medicine man had fallen in love with this young girl who did not return his affection. The only way he could marry her was through his prominence in the tribe. The girl had a sweetheart of her own age and wanted to marry him. But she had little to say in her choice of a husband. Her parents decided for her. They believed it was for her material good and their own happiness to have her marry this prominent man who could provide well for her.

Soon the girl tired of her aged husband and longed for the young lover from whom she was separated. Unluckily for the fortunes of the medicine man he went for a visit to the Flathead Indians. While he was gone, the girl announced she was going on a visit to the home of her mother. But instead ran off with her lover. Nothing was known about it, until the old medicine man returned from his visit and found his young wife gone. In vain he sought her; he was jealous and mourned her deeply. He met her in the circle-camp for the first time, and with the help of two prominent chiefs, persuaded her to return to his tipi.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE SUN DANCE

That day came a messenger from the agency. He was a half-breed interpreter of no standing with white men or Indians. The agent was absent from the reservation and his office clerk sent the message; that they might have horse racing and games for two more

days, but the government would not allow them to give religious ceremonies; after two days they must break camp and return to their homes.

Then Elk Horn, the herald, rode through the camp and called upon the Indians to build the sun lodge. He shouted in a powerful voice:

"Men and women! Come forth and help! Let everyone do their share to keep up our worship of the Sun. You are no longer helpers, but sit idly in your lodges and seem willing to abandon all of our

Elk Horn the Herald

old religious customs. While we live we should keep up our religion. It is bad to care only for horse racing, gambling, and whiskey of the white men."

But the entreaty of the old herald did not stir the Indians to action. Everyone was afraid to take the lead, lest they be thrown into jail at the agency. The heavy girders and poles and piles of green branches still lay unused in the center of the camp-circle. Nothing was being done—not even post holes were dug—all were afraid of the agent.

That evening there was a fine sunset, the third day of the big

camp. Over the Rockies the sky was golden, with many tints in purple and sombre red. In the thickets of the river valley many birds were singing,—white crowns, thrushes, and meadow larks. Soon the lodges of the big circle became illuminated by bright inside-fires, until the camp looked like an enormous group of colored lanterns. Then a full moon rose over the prairies and flooded the camp with its light. Lodges with their crowns of tapering poles stood out in sharp relief against the burnished eastern sky.

In spite of the ban placed on their worship by the United States Government, a quiet ceremony took place that night in the sacred lodge. I heard the solemn chanting of many voices in unison, and saw women passing silently in and out bearing mysterious looking bundles.

Round the outside of the lodge green branches were placed—the sign an important ceremony of the sun dance was taking place and only those taking part were expected. But I had friends there and entered. By the dim light of the fire, I saw a circle of seven men and fourteen women, seated silently with heads bowed in prayer. Spotted Eagle, the head medicine man, was at the back, the place of honor and importance. He was acting as advisor to the givers of the sun dance.

There were also present, Old Chief, Big Moon, Bull Plume, Red Plume, Don't Go Out, and Dog Skin. To the right of the medicine man was the Fasting Woman, she who had made the vow and was the object of interest through the ceremony, all the serious and solemn aspects of the sun dance centered about her.

Rattles were handed to me with a request that I help them in the ceremony, which I did by joining in the chants and beating time with the rattles. No one spoke loud; everyone whispered. All who came entered quietly and reverently. That night throughout the big camp no noise was allowed, because of the fasting woman and her ceremony.

Some of the men prayed and there was a long prayer by the wife of Bull Plume, after which a case of tongues was opened and pieces of the consecreated food passed around. Before eating, a piece was planted in the ground as a sacrifice.

Next morning an astonishing message came to the Indians from the clerk at the agency, their time would be up by twelve o'clock that day; they must build the sun lodge that same morning and then go home; the timbers and branches they had cut and brought from the river valley must be used and not wasted; they must break camp and be back at their ranches before sunset; the agent left these orders before he went away; if they were not carried out, the tribe would not be allowed to have a circle-camp next summer.

The head-men were astounded. This agent was new and might

be ignorant of their customs. But he must know they had a council of chiefs to talk over important matters. They deeply resented being ignored in their tribal affairs. He had never summoned them together, never consulted their wishes, or tried to be friendly. And the boy who was ill, in whose behalf the vow was made to give the ceremony was now dead. The body lay near-by in his father's tipi. Many believed his death was caused by the interference of their agent.

The Head-Men in Council

Then the head-men met in council. They gathered in the open space, near the unfinished sun lodge. I followed their proceedings and made picture records. I took a photograph of the chiefs seated in a row on the prairie—Curly Bear, Middle Calf, Shoots In The Air, Cream Antelope, and Bull Calf, in the order named. Scattered about were piles of timbers and poles, everything in confusion; and a throng of Indians, men, women, and children, all excited and eager to know what their leaders were going to do.

I finished my work and made haste to get away. I had no defense to make, for this stupid and autocratic agent, and the blundering management of reservation affairs by the government. The agent rules with an iron hand; he was still away and nothing could be done.

But Middle Calf had been watching. He was of the old generation, an associate of Mad Wolf, my Indian father. He spoke to the council and they sent a messenger asking me to come and sit with them. It showed their confidence and was a great honor, but it was an awkward situation.

My sympathy was with the Indians. And I was ashamed of the agent and the government at Washington. The Indians had been patient. They showed more tolerance and restraint in their troubles than their narrow and bigoted agent. Now they were angry and dissatisfied; there was smouldering unrest, but their spirit was broken. They were suffering from the disintegrating and corroding effects of poverty, illness, and inability to adjust themselves quickly from their primitive life to our modern civilization.

The chiefs motioned me to a seat in their midst. And a throng of Indian spectators crowded around to hear what was said.

For a moment no one spoke. Even the crowd was silent. Then Curly Bear as the oldest took the lead of the council. He was a fine looking man of dignity and force, one of the tribal judges or counsellors; known for his justice and wisdom and sound judgment.

Curly Bear asked me to be seated in front of their council. Then as leader he addressed me as follows:

"Our father, the agent, has been telling us first one thing and then another. He has never allowed us to talk with him and we do not understand what he wants us to do. He sent us word through a messenger, that we could camp here for several days. Now he commands us to build the sun lodge and move camp while the sun is in the south (midday). Our father warns if we disobey he will not allow us to meet in a circle-camp next summer. This is unreasonable; we cannot build the sun lodge and carry through the ceremony in so short a time. We know you are our friend. We ask you to advise us what to do; and to tell us the truth."

After Curly Bear finished, all waited while I considered carefully my reply. Then I said:

"When I last saw your agent he said he was going away. He told his clerk what he wanted you to do."

Bull Calf said bitterly: "What is your opinion of this agent?"

I answered guardedly: "Before I came to your country this summer, I did not know him. He is a stranger to me."

Middle Calf said: "What do you think of the way things are now being run on our reservation?"

I replied: "There are so many rumors it is hard to know the truth. Your agent is a stranger here and has not lived among you long. It is too soon to judge."

Bull Calf said sharply: "It would be better if he did not remain longer with us." Then he continued sadly: "You have known our people through many years and have been present at many sun dances. Have you ever seen a disturbance, or known anything harmful that was caused by our ceremonies. We gather every summer to give this festival in honor of the Sun. We fast and pray, that we may feel better in our hearts and able to lead straight lives. We get to

know each other better and feel more kindly to each other. Why does the Great Father at Washington try to put an end to our ceremonies? What harm does he think comes from them? When white men take away from us our religion, we have nothing left. If the Indians should go to a place where white men were gathered in a religious ceremony and interfered, what would the white men do?"

I said earnestly: "The reason I came among you was to find out about these things and to explain them to white men in the east who have power. Now they are igorant about your religion. I will tell them the truth, and then they may act more wisely. The hearts of many white men in my country are warm towards the Indians. If they interfere wrongly, it is through ignorance and because they do not understand. When they know better, they may act more wisely."

I turned to my friend Middle Calf and said: "Have you ever tried to talk these things over with your agent?"

He replied: "We have a council of fifteen chiefs appointed for this purpose, but the new agent has never even called us together."

Said I: "This new agent is a stranger and perhaps does not understand about your council. It is time you were getting better

Building the Sun Lodge

acquainted. The best way is to go to him and talk things over. If you never meet, how will it be possible for you to get to know each other better?"

The council then broke up, and the head men showed astonishing submission to the unreasonable orders of their agent. They set to work to finish the sun lodge quickly. Some dug post holes, others harnessed teams and started in wagons for the river valley for necessary timbers. They worked hard; and when the sun was high in the sky, the lodge was nearing completion. Under ordinary conditions and with the regular ceremony, it would have taken an entire day.

This time there were no tribal customs, no tribal feast, no religious ceremonies so dear to the Indian heart. There was just the manual labor of building the structure, which they were forbidden to use, according to the whim of their agent.

I was taking pictures of the Indians at work on their sun lodge. It was now midday; the sun was in the south and high in the sky. I saw a team of horses coming from the agency. There were two in a light wagon, both on the front seat. The half-breed interpreter was driving and beside him the office clerk. He was the first white employee or representative of the government to appear in any of the camps.

The wagon drew up beside the sun lodge and the half-breed interpreter summoned the head men, who left their work and grouped themselves round the wagon.

The clerk was a small and insignificant youth, very young and inexperienced. He was at a loss to know what to do or say. He looked about twenty, had light hair, mild blue eyes, and weak face—just an ordinary office clerk, in fear of the autocratic agent. The only way he knew, was to obey literally the instructions of his superior.

The chiefs waited anxiously, while the young clerk asked through his interpreter; who had given them permission to remain so long in the camp. Then he took out his watch and said it was half past twelve; they were already half an hour late; they had strict orders to leave by noon.

The dignified chiefs made no reply. They looked at each other and turned their backs upon the clerk and half-breed. They gloomily finished building their worthless sun lodge. It now had no religious or social significance and was all a waste. And the child in whose behalf the vow was made now lay dead in the camp.

Silently they took down their tipis and departed for their distant homes. It was not possible for Indians to fathom the strange ways of white men. They were baffled by him and by his culture.

TRUSTEES

Mr. Joseph Scott, *President*

Messrs. A. C. Balch and John Treanor, *Vice-Presidents*

Mr. Allan C. Balch
Rt. Rev. John J. Cantwell
Mr. Frederick E. Keeler
Mr. James R. Martin
Mr. Harvey S. Mudd
Mr. Stuart O'Melveny
Mrs. Lee A. Phillips
Mr. Henry M. Robinson
Mrs. Samuel Storrow
Mr. Torrance C. Welch
Mrs. Hancock Banning
Mr. Eli P. Clark
Mr. Edward D. Lyman
Mr. Ben R. Meyer
Mr. George O. Noble
Mr. Thomas G. Patten
Gen. Charles McC. Reeve
Mr. Joseph Scott
Mr. John Treanor
Col. H. O. Wheeler

STAFF

James A. B. Scherer, *Director*
Alfred Vincent Kidder, *Research Associate*
Mark Raymond Harrington, *Curator*
Charles Amsden, *Executive Secretary, Treasurer*
Mildred A. Poland, *Assistant Secretary*
Walter McClintock, *Fellow in Ethnology*
James B. McNair, *Consultant in Ethno-Botany*
Fred K. Hinchman, *Supervisor of Extension*
Frances E. Watkins, *Assistant Curator*
Verne McKinley, *Library Assistant*
Milton Frock, *Superintendent of Building and Grounds*
James T. Vandagrift, *Assistant Superintendent*

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Dr. John C. Merriam, *President of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.*

Dr. James Henry Breasted, *Director of the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago.*

Dr. Alfred L. Kroeber, *Director of the Anthropological Museum, University of California.*